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television news & notes

'FIRST-TIME' DIRECTOR

Charles S. Dutton ("Roc") will make his directorial debut with "First-Time Felon," an HBO New York City drama to premiere in the fall.

CHARLES S. DUTTON
HBO debut

Stars are **Omar Epps** ("Higher Learning"), **Delroy Lindo** ("Ransom"), **Rachel Ticotin** ("Total Recall"), and **Treach**, of the rap group Naughty by Nature.

"Felon" is based on the true story of a young inmate sent to help save an Illinois town from devastating floods in 1993.

DISNEY DOES IT AGAIN

"The Wonderful World of Disney" returns to Sunday night television this fall. Three guesses which network is responsible.

ABC, owned by the Walt Disney Co., said it will show 35 of the studio's films starting Sept. 21 on Sunday nights at 7 p.m.

The network is bringing back to life one of the most venerable series on television, one that ran for 34 years on three different networks and under several different names.

Disney head **Michael Eisner** will take over the late Walt Disney's role in introducing each week's movie.

Included on the schedule will be the broadcast television premieres of "Pocahontas," "The Santa Clause," and "Babe."

The Disney series started on ABC in 1954, and was a big hit with its **Davy Crockett** features. The series switched to NBC from 1961 to 1981, then was picked up by CBS for two years. ABC and NBC attempted brief revivals of the series later in the 1980s. It went off the air in 1990.

At various times, the show was titled "Disneyland," "Walt Disney Presents," "Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color," "The Wonderful World of Disney," "The Disney Sunday Movie," and "The Magical World of Disney."

ABC also said that it is bringing **Dan Aykroyd** back to television as the star of a situation comedy. Titled "Soul Man," the show features the former "Saturday Night Live" star as a widowed minister and father of four. The midseason replacement series is scheduled to premiere at 8:30 p.m. April 15.

RANCH DRESSING

ANN-MARGRET
CBS roundup?

Ann-Margret's prospective CBS series would have her playing a feisty and flirtatious widow who owns a cattle ranch and lodge in New Mexico — and who sometimes finds herself at odds with her grown son, who runs the hostelry for her.

SITCOM SPORTS REPORT

Being in the sports media sounds like the glamour job of the moment in the sitcom world. There's "Everybody Loves Raymond" and "Arsenio" with lead characters who report on sports — and this fall, **Tony Danza** might join them in the press box. Danza has an on-air series deal with NBC, and on April 11 he begins a pilot for his show, which he will also executive-produce.

The untitled sitcom has him playing a New York City sports columnist, who is divorced and lives with his two daughters in an Upper East Side apartment.

ONE-LINERS

CARL LUMBLY
"M.A.N.T.I.S"

Repeats of "M.A.N.T.I.S." will run at 8 p.m. Sundays on Sci-Fi Channel as of April 6. The **Carl Lumbly** drama originally aired on Fox in 1994-95. . . . **Kirsten Dunst**, the juvenile actress of "Interview With the Vampire" fame, goes back into fright territory with the ABC movie "Tower of Terror." The tale has her working with a tabloid reporter who is investigating a paranormal story about a haunted Hollywood hotel where five people vanished one Halloween night.

— FROM NEWS SERVICE REPORTS

Tower of Terror signs Kirsten Dunst

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